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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 22 April 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Organization of work
- General exchange of views

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The meeting was called to order at 11.05 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open the 155th meeting, the first of the 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

At the outset I wish to extend a most cordial welcome to all representatives attending the 1991 substantive session. I feel deeply honoured and privileged by the trust and confidence delegations have shown in me and my country, Austria, by having elected me Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for 1991.

I wish to offer my most sincere congratulations to my distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Nana Sutresna of Indonesia, on his outstanding performance in so ably conducting last year's historic session. I furthermore want to congratulate the Chairmen of the four Working Groups - Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary, Working Group I; Ambassador Amre Moussa of Egypt, Working Group II; Ambassador Nugroho Wisnumurti of Indonesia, Working Group III; and Ambassador Luiz de Araujo Castro of Brazil, Working Group IV - who were elected at the organizational session earlier this year.

I wish to pay a most heartfelt tribute to our Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, for the untiring efforts he and his colleagues in the Department for Disarmament Affairs are constantly making in order to promote the process of disarmament and to enhance the role of the United Nations in that field. I am pleased to know that I and the Chairmen of the Working Groups can rely on the valuable assistance of the Commission's Secretary, Mr. Lin Kuo-chung, and all the members of his staff who will actively contribute to the success of our endeavours.

(The Chairman)

I also want to welcome very warmly the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Miljan Komatina, whose presence proves the excellent relationship between the disarmament communities in Geneva and New York.

For my part, I can only pledge to devote all my energy to the most important task we are to undertake over the next three weeks. I am confident that the Commission will embark on its work in a businesslike and result-oriented manner that will lead us to tangible results.

The Commission's 1991 substantive session opens only a few months after the community of nations had united in the face of an immediate threat to international peace and security. The integrative capacity which the United Nations displayed at that crucial moment, when international law was broken and the universally accepted principles of non-aggression and national sovereignty were jeopardized, augurs well for the universal Organization of nations to face future challenges and to find solutions for issues of a global dimension.

(The Chairman)

The renaissance of the United Nations, as many have been labeling it, coincides with a new phase for the Disarmament Commission, the Organization's deliberative body entrusted with disarmament affairs. After years of growing clumsiness resulting from the failure to identify clear priorities in the ever-expanding agenda of the Commission, the implementation of the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" provides an organizational structure adequate to develop the thrust necessary for approaching the Commission's objective as stated in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, held in 1978: to consider the elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament to be submitted as recommendations to the General Assembly and, through it, to its negotiating body.

That objective was voiced in the Secretary-General's opening statement at the Commission's first meeting in 1978, which expressed confidence that, aware of its mandate, the Disarmament Commission would be one of the principal international bodies to accelerate progress towards disarmament and to tackle the problem of an unceasing and ever-increasing arms race. In that context, the Secretary-General also pointed out that because of its universal membership, the Disarmament Commission brought to bear on the consideration of the question of disarmament the collective political awareness of the world community.

All of us are aware that the Disarmament Commission and its complex task, reflecting the evolving global security situation and diverse national security interests, have not been equally appreciated and unconditionally supported by all Member States at all times. In fact, we can identify periods in the history of the Disarmament Commission when the negative correlation

(The Chairman)

between the increasing number of agenda items and the decreasing dedication to substantive dialogue posed a threat to the perpetuation of constructive deliberations within the Commission.

When the 1989 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission came to an end without having been able to conclude even a single one of the seven substantive items on its agenda despite the generally favourable international situation and the organizational improvements achieved in working structure as well as in the utilization of meeting-service resources, the usefulness of the Disarmament Commission was unofficially questioned by more than just a few delegations. The general disappointment at the fact that there had been almost no outcome at all, the widely felt doubts about the usefulness of spending days and weeks discussing issues among which not even the most promising finally reached a consensus text and the painful understanding that that session of the Commission was almost entirely a loss for the multilateral deliberative process of disarmament necessitated a thorough reassessment of the 11-year Disarmament Commission process.

Recognizing that the Disarmament Commission was irreplaceable as the only multilateral forum for in-depth deliberation on specific disarmament issues, the Chairman of the Commission at its 1989 session, Ambassador Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya of Zaire, on an Austrian proposal, convened an informal group that undertook the task of formulating a comprehensive reform package which, as an annex to resolution 44/119 C and also contained in document A/CN.10/137, constitutes the basis for the succeeding streamlining and refocusing and the consequent revitalization of the Disarmament Commission.

(The Chairman)

While the adopted reforms have been implemented for the first time in the organization and substance of the 1991 session of the Disarmament Commission, the provision contained in paragraph 3 (5) of the reform paper stating that at its 1990 session the Commission should make every effort to conclude all its agenda items except the new substantive ones had already contributed substantially to the great success of the 1990 substantive session. By finalizing and adopting by consensus recommendations or sets of principles on four substantive agenda items and by achieving consensus on a comprehensive and substantial text reflecting the various positions of the delegations participating in the deliberations on a fifth item, the Disarmament Commission managed to rid itself of the hampering legacy of the past and to turn uncompromisingly towards future-oriented items.

The new topic on the 1990 agenda, "Objective information on military matters", was dealt with in a frank and positive way. The open exchange of views on that issue - originally not an uncontroversial one - has prepared the substantive treatment of the item on objective information on military matters which we anticipate for the present session.

Whereas the mandate of the Disarmament Commission and its decision-making methods are reaffirmed by the reform paper, the implementation of substantial improvements will facilitate this year's substantive session and its deliberations; the limitation of the working agenda to a maximum of four items will facilitate concentration on a few well-defined topics. None of the subjects on the working agenda should be maintained there for more than three consecutive years. If no agreement can be reached within the regular life-span of a given agenda item, the views or positions of the various delegations should be reflected either in a joint statement or in a Chairman's

(The Chairman)

summary of the proceedings. This provision is to prevent the "emptying" of the deliberations on a topic on which consensus is unlikely. The possible reconsideration of any subject that had been suspended should be reviewed by the Commission at each session.

Many elements of the reform package were reflected in the organizational arrangements adopted by the organizational session in December and January, which included: the approval of the provisional agenda; the establishment of four working groups on the four substantive agenda items; the appointment of Chairmen for the Working Groups; a decision on the date and duration of the 1991 substantive session; and a general programme of work for the current session.

The new reform programme has thus proved its usefulness even before the actual start of the 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. Apart from the above-mentioned paragraph 3 (5), which stimulated last year's Disarmament Commission session, the exact definition of four well-defined subjects enables the Chairmen of the Working Groups and interested delegations to initiate their preparations in a timely way. This seems to have been of particular importance in view of the welcome fact that three of the four items on the agenda are now to be considered "new". Hence, the chairmen of the working groups - who, in accordance with the reform programme, were elected at the organizational session - started in good time to consult informally with interested delegations on the outlines of the Working Groups as regards both the organizational structure and the substantive content of the items.

(The Chairman)

The various views thus compiled might serve as an initial input to make the deliberations in the respective working groups more productive. The general exchange of views in the plenary session, as well as the short general debates in the three working groups dealing with new items will provide further opportunities for all delegations to make their views known and their positions understood. Thus ample opportunities to deliberate on the four agenda items of this year's substantive session of the Commission will not only provide every delegation with time to voice its suggestions or concerns, but will also coincide with the very nature of the Commission as the United Nations forum for in-depth deliberations on disarmament matters.

The four substantive agenda items of this year's session of the Disarmament Commission - objective information on military matters; process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons; regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security; the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields - all have great relevance for the future of international security. The interrelation between the second, third and fourth substantive agenda items and international security is expressed by the wording. The future integration of the concepts of disarmament and international security is thus already provided for.

The only old item on the agenda - objective information on military matters - is, functionally, interconnected with the aspects of regional and global disarmament and international security.

(The Chairman)

With its 1991 substantive session, the Commission is being redefined as a forward-looking and universal forum. Its future orientation is reflected by the items on its agenda, dealing with issues of great importance for international peace and security, which have to be enhanced and guaranteed by the growing awareness of the importance of continued disarmament. Its universality is reflected by the support given to it, as well as by the global dimensions of the agenda items.

The 1991 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission not only represents a milestone in the evolution of this body, but also offers a major opportunity for the ongoing discussion on disarmament affairs. The dramatic developments in the Gulf region, which started out with an unparalleled armament effort, led to the occupation of a sovereign country, subsequently to the mobilization of the community of nations and finally to the defeat of the aggressor and his withdrawal. These developments have given dramatic relevance to our deliberations. The war in the Gulf highlighted for the first time the overwhelming role of high-technology weapons systems in international conflicts. During the course of the war the nuclear option and the use of weapons systems of mass destruction were not completely ruled out. In the aftermath of the conflict, a regional approach to the solution of the ongoing crisis, within which disarmament has to be considered an essential aspect, will be pivotal. And last but not least, certain information on military matters in the region might well be one of the elements of a lasting stability.

The four substantive agenda items of the ongoing session of the Commision will thus require an approach which goes far beyond purely academic deliberations. The close linkage of each of the four subject matters under consideration in this forum with the recent crisis in the Gulf region, which

(The Chairman)

has united the nations of the world in a common crisis-management effort, demonstrates their relevance in the global security system. The recent reform, which is to be considered of paradigmatic importance for the Commission's future, and which has made this body a capable forum for in-depth deliberations on disarmament matters, could not have been more timely.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The CHAIRMAN: As members may recall, at our organizational session held in December 1990 we tentatively approved the provisional agenda which is before the Commission.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.28.

The agenda was adopted.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: I should now like to come to the question of organization of work for the session. First, as to the general exchange of views, because of the limited time available to the Commission, it was the general understanding that there should be a limited general exchange of views, allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. In this regard, four meetings are allocated to such purposes as indicated in the general programme of work and the weekly timetable which have been circulated. I should like to urge those delegations wishing to make general statements to inscribe their names on the list of speakers with the secretariat as soon as possible. The deadline for such inscriptions is 1 p.m. today. In addition, 25 copies of statements should be provided to the

(The Chairman)

secretariat. If I hear no objection I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed in this manner.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Secondly, as to the allocation of time for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility for practical purposes will be observed and the secretariat will issue a weekly timetable on the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body through consultations with the chairmen of the working groups. However, a general programme of work (A/CN.10/1991/CRP.1) for the entire session has been agreed and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment, as necessary. As stated in the adopted reform programme, no more than two simultaneous formal meetings of subsidiary bodies will be held, except for informal consultations. The secretariat has prepared and distributed the working timetable for the first week of the session in accordance with the decision made by the Bureau. In order to utilize the available conference resources efficiently, I would urgently appeal to all members of the Disarmament Commission to be punctual in attending all the scheduled meetings of the Commission, as only four meetings have been allocated for the general exchange of views.

(The Chairman)

Thirdly, I turn to the documentation for the current session. I wish to point out that last year's report of the Disarmament Commission to the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly - document A/45/42 - as well as documents A/CN.10/140 and A/CN.10/142, will serve as important background material. The latter documents contain a number of proposals on agenda item 4 to be considered this year. Previous reports of the Commission will of course also be useful for reference. Since there are three new items at this session, I understand that the Commission will have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on those items. I should like to urge those delegations to submit their papers to the Secretariat as soon as possible for processing.

Fourthly, there is the status of the non-governmental organizations. As has been the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are welcome to attend the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole of the Disarmament Commission as observers.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

The CHAIRMAN: Various aspects of the organization of work for this session having been considered, I should now like to call on those representatives who wish to make general statements at this stage on various subjects contained in the agenda.

Mr. ERDOS (Hungary): It is a particular pleasure for the Hungarian delegation to have the privilege of being the first to congratulate you, Sir, the representative of our close neighbour Austria, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The special ties of friendship that our two countries enjoy in all spheres of their relations, whether private or official, are but one source of satisfaction: equally

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

significant are your professional qualities, your knowledge and your diplomatic skill, which guarantee that we shall have a successful session in 1991. May I also express my good wishes to the other members of the extended Bureau as well as to the officers of the Secretariat.

I wish also to express our sincere appreciation to your predecessor in the Chair, Ambassador Sutresna of Indonesia, for the successful manner in which he conducted the Commission's 1990 session. His personal efforts largely contributed to our great progress, which holds the promise of a new phase in the activities of a thoroughly rejuvenated Disarmament Commission.

This year, when the world is crossing the threshold of a new decade, the last one of this millennium, the Disarmament Commission is meeting in dramatically new circumstances, marked not only by the end of the cold war, the termination of ideological confrontations in Europe and the sweeping and fundamental changes in international relations, but also by the beginning of a long-awaited process of profound developments in the United Nations.

The revitalization of the world Organization is clearly in progress, and major results have been achieved in its primary task of maintaining international peace and security. The increasing authority of the international community and the growing willingness to engage in concerted action - a willingness that the United Nations was able to muster in the face of the Gulf crisis - provide clear evidence of the potentials inherent in this Organization when it is no longer split by super-Power rivalry.

The reinvigoration of the United Nations has brought about major changes in the Disarmament Commission as well. The unprecedented efforts of the member States have succeeded in reshaping the Commission. The adoption last year of an agreed text on the reform measures, entitled "Ways and means to

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", was only the beginning, we hope, of a new, more productive period in the history of the Commission.

Hungary has always attached importance to the effective functioning of the Commission and continues to regard it as an indispensable deliberative forum where each member State can participate and have an equal say in the discussions on all multilateral disarmament and related international questions. It was in that spirit that my country supported the reform ideas and exerted every effort to help them prevail.

We find it important, however, to preserve all the positive and tested elements of the proceedings. Above all, we strongly stand for consensus, the only acceptable decision-making method in questions of international security and disarmament.

The Hungarian delegation believes that form and substance should always be in harmony. Therefore we wish to emphasize the urgent need for perceptible changes in the manner in which delegations deal with the substantive items on our agenda. We hope that the positive changes that I referred to earlier will generate more constructive and more flexible attitudes, a greater willingness to seek solutions and a sincere desire to achieve consensus.

We also welcome the thrust of the reform designed to prevent the mushrooming of agenda items and to achieve greater efficiency. The reform provisions keep abreast of the new expectations. Therefore, in our view it is now incumbent upon the Commission, and upon every single delegation, to make the reform's first year efficient and productive. In that way we can provide clear evidence that the appropriate disarmament machinery and genuine political will do produce results. This optimism is certainly fostered by the

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fact that last year the Commission recorded the unprecedented achievement of finalizing and adopting recommendations or sets of principles on four substantive items and that deliberations on a fifth item were concluded. The sixth issue, that of "Objective information on military matters", was discussed only in a preliminary manner. Nevertheless, those discussions resulted in a number of very useful findings and conclusions that now form a good basis for further consideration.

At this juncture, I wish to express my appreciation to all members of the Commission for having accepted me as Chairman of the Working Group that will have to deal with the issue of objective information on military matters. I wish also to take this opportunity to thank my friend in the Chair, Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the consultation group and for the rich and useful legacy he has bequeathed to me.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

Having already mentioned the first substantive item on our agenda, may I be permitted to set out in some detail the Hungarian position on this rather complex issue?

The importance which Hungary has always attached to questions connected with objective information on military matters has real, long-standing and solid foundations in our foreign policy. Any participant in disarmament negotiations or any student of their history can readily testify to the undisputed fact that measures aimed at building confidence and increasing openness and transparency have always had favourable effects on the atmosphere of those negotiations. At the same time, such measures have also had the salutary side-effect of influencing, in a positive manner, the security perceptions of the negotiating parties. Consequently, Hungary has always done its best to promote such measures, unilaterally or bilaterally, regionally or internationally.

For this reason, it is a source of satisfaction to note that the importance of exchanging objective information is receiving growing recognition. Among the early attempts to establish machineries for such exchanges, the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures is perhaps the best-known example.

In recent years, a growing number of States have provided such information or have taken other measures with the aim of increasing openness. It is our firm belief that such activities should be encouraged, to involve as many States as possible. This holds especially true for regions of tension, where such confidence-building has an invaluable role to play in averting conflict or in maintaining peace and stability.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

It is a strange contradiction of our time that, in the era of an information revolution, international access to information and the exchange and flow of information are far from having been revolutionized in certain regions of the world; this is particularly true as regards military information. We must acknowledge that the reasons for this unfortunate state of affairs are many and varied: deeply embedded hatred, age-old suspicion and prejudice, national or religious intolerance, national rivalry and so on. In addition, it is also a sombre fact that, while the interdependence of countries with different social systems was an objective reality, inter-State relations have for a long time been overburdened with ideological considerations which have dramatically hampered communications between the States involved.

At the end of this period of rigid ideological division between States, and in the light of consistent efforts to overcome subregional and regional conflicts, the elimination of this unwholesome relationship now requires, among other things, that military openness should be treated as a natural and all-pervading norm of inter-State relations and as a means and basis for a real and verifiable disarmament process. Hope for this is afforded by the fact that today hardly any State denies the indispensable role played by the multilateral flow of objective military information in strengthening confidence and security or in the verification of compliance with disarmament agreements.

Hungary has a sound record of providing information in the security field. We have adopted the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures. We have provided detailed data on the size and structure of the Hungarian armed forces. In the framework of

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unilateral confidence-building measures, we have presented annual information on our chemical industry and chemicals trading activities, as will be required under the future chemical-weapons convention. In practice, this means that Hungary is complying with all the provisions of the future convention even before it is concluded and enters into force. Furthermore, we are ready to submit - on a reciprocal basis - to verification of that information and of our defence, industrial and trading activities pertinent to the convention.

We took an active part in working out the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which should be followed up by further agreements and the enhancement of the process itself. In order to make a contribution to the European disarmament process, Hungary received negotiators involved in the talks on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) and provided them with an opportunity of studying the military hardware used by our armed forces which was affected by the provisions of the CFE agreement.

We participated actively in the elaboration of an agreement on a substantial new set of confidence-building and security-building measures within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and attach the highest degree of importance to their implementation and further development. In this context, the establishment in Vienna of a Conflict Prevention Centre and the ensuing institutionalized multilateral information activity in the military field bode well for the cause of increased security and enduring peace and stability, not only in Europe but in the whole world.

It was also in the spirit of strengthening openness and transparency that my country has supported from the very outset the idea of creating an open-skies regime, and played an active part in organizing and hosting the

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

open-skies conference, which has succeeded in compiling a comprehensive draft treaty. Within the framework of the preparation of the draft treaty, two participants in the future régime, Canada and Hungary, have opened their airspace for reciprocal aerial inspection in order to provide evidence of the workability of the régime. We are convinced that the degree of agreement reached in the Budapest round can certainly be built on and that there will therefore soon be a possibility of resuming and successfully concluding the work on this very important treaty on open skies.

With a view to further contributing to the successful conclusion of the open skies treaty and to giving an example of how to promote greater openness and transparency on a bilateral level, Hungary and Romania are working on a bilateral open-skies agreement, which is very close to being ready for signature.

We believe that these examples indicate our commitment to the idea of objective information on military matters. It is our hope that the provision, or rather the exchange, of such information will be enhanced in the near future and will also attract States that have not as yet displayed similar interest in such exercises. To facilitate the exchange of information within a multilateral framework, the possibilities and potential of the United Nations should be further investigated. The experience gained so far could be put to better use, but in order to make that feasible, the United Nations disarmament staff might also need to be reinforced.

The active interest of Hungary in the other three substantive items on the agenda and the constructive involvement of our delegation in negotiations or deliberations in every one of these contexts are not unknown in this body.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

This delegation is prepared to set out its views and suggestions, and it certainly plans to do so when the relevant Working Groups start their discussions.

Here and now, however, I wish to conclude this statement, Mr. Chairman, by wishing you success. I can assure you that the Hungarian delegation will do its best to help you in the discharge of the duties of your responsible position.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. I am fully confident that you will accomplish your task in an efficient and skillful manner. My delegation will cooperate with you in every possible way towards that end. I also take this opportunity to extend our felicitations to the other members of the Bureau.

The delegations of Austria and Indonesia have in the past taken an active part in the work on the question of objective information on military matters. We were therefore greatly encouraged by the large number of Member States which supported relevant General Assembly resolutions, thereby recognizing the importance of openness and transparency in all areas of military activity. This constitutes an important step forward for the substantive consideration of this issue.

My delegation has long viewed the availability of relevant information as an essential prerequisite to overcoming apprehension, establishing mutual confidence, promoting more open military policies and, above all, facilitating the process of disarmament. Some of the notable achievements in this regard have been in the wider context of confidence-building measures, especially in Europe. However, these have assumed ever greater importance for Asia and the Pacific, where endemic conflicts, as well as persistent mistrust and miscommunication, have for so long frustrated the initiation of arms-reduction talks.

In this regard, proposals for confidence-building measures on land and sea call for our careful attention. Of critical importance are the elimination of certain types of weapons, restraint on armaments acquisitions, deployment limitations and the curbing of the naval arms race. Another essential element should be mutual military restraint by external Powers,

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

particularly in strategically important areas and waters. My delegation believes that these measures, as well as new concepts and approaches, will have to be considered in order to provide the opportunity for the States concerned to decide their own destiny under conditions of stability and mutual confidence.

In the United Nations, Indonesia has for a number of years supported the Organization's efforts to play an important role in securing adequate information on military strength and in facilitating the objective assessment of military capabilities.

In this context, Indonesia has participated in the development of an international system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures. My delegation has consistently emphasized in the Commission the need for a reliable data base on such expenditures, and for a number of years the Organization has been engaged in the task of improving the comparability of statistics. While we are aware of the methodological and practical difficulties in using and interpreting such data, the utility of having that information base would greatly facilitate the analysis of global and regional magnitudes and trends. In our view, greater participation by States in this effort would not only lead to the standardization and clarification of various issues but also make a significant contribution to greater openness and transparency concerning the resources devoted to military purposes.

Parallel with these efforts, however, our attention should be focused on enhancing the United Nations role of becoming the repository of objective data primarily through the collection, compilation and dissemination of information on military matters. In the context of the emerging trend towards greater openness in the military field, the establishment of a satellite communications system under the auspices of the United Nations would be

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

particularly useful in compiling data on armed forces and armament production, military research and development, arms transfers and foreign military aid; all of this would make a significant contribution to an understanding of the state of armaments and armed forces, remove apprehension, and ultimately facilitate the process of concrete disarmament agreements on a global, regional and subregional level.

Efforts during the past four decades and more to limit armaments have resulted in a number of bilateral and multilateral accords. Those agreements notwithstanding, the current international scene is characterized by the massive accumulation of armaments, especially nuclear arsenals, which continue to cast their shadow across the globe. In addition, weapons of awesome destructive power continue to be added at an unrelenting pace. Those who hoped that the competition in armaments had largely run its course against the backdrop of improvements in East-West relations have little ground for optimism. We now must also face up to the reality that the international disarmament strategy contained in the Final Document has, by and large, remained unimplemented.

Concurrently, however, we should also recognize certain positive developments in recent years. In the post-cold-war era, the two major Powers have shown a greater disposition to engage in substantive negotiations on a wide range of critical issues. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - was of timely significance, not only for Europe but also for Asia and beyond, and contributed to enhanced international security and stability. The pledge to negotiate deep reductions in strategic weapons has also been welcomed by the international community.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Despite these positive and reassuring trends, a fundamental reorientation will be needed in our approaches to security and disarmament. As nuclear armaments have drastically altered perceptions and calculations of national and international security, and as the destiny of each nation is inextricably bound in the collective security of all nations, the question of the elimination of nuclear weapons has acquired increasing urgency in multilateral negotiations, for unilateral policies and partial measures may have been adequate in the past but the multi-dimensional nature of the problems posed by nuclear weapons to mankind calls for a collective approach.

Such an approach would involve inter alia the elaboration of the stages of nuclear disarmament, including the responsibilities of nuclear Powers and the role of non-nuclear States; the identification of the duties and obligations of the nuclear Powers to refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear States and in the prevention of nuclear war; the search for alternatives to doctrines of deterrence and reliance on nuclear weapons; and the prevention of the geographic proliferation of nuclear arms into outer space and into oceans and seas. My delegation expects the Commission during this session to come to grips with those critical issues and to provide concrete guidelines for negotiations.

As regards agenda item 6, it has been self-evident that some of the obstacles in the way of disarmament are regional in nature, as many States perceive threats to security from within their own regions. At the same time, there is also the extra-regional dimension to regional security. Consequently, disarmament efforts in one region cannot be separated from disarmament efforts in other regions, nor from global efforts. The regional approach is thus an important constituent of the gradual or step-by-step approach towards arms limitations and reductions.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

It is also pertinent to note that in many instances regional disarmament may be influenced decisively by the security perceptions and concerns of the States involved, by the desire to prevent outside States from becoming involved in the region and by the existence of regional organizations reflecting a degree of consensus concerning the region's problems.

To many non-aligned countries nuclear issues are of worldwide relevance because of the global reach of nuclear armaments. Hence, a great majority of those States have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. While the advantages of a global approach are clear in the case of non-proliferation, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones provides advantages that the global approach cannot achieve. Such zones would require the total absence of nuclear weapons, as well as specific security guarantees by the nuclear States that they will refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against zonal States. Such a zonal regime strengthens the Non-Proliferation Treaty by reinforcing it through more specific guarantees given by the nuclear Powers.

In Indonesia's view, therefore, the criteria for a regional approach are as follows: first, the initiative should come from States within the region, preferably through a regional organization; secondly, all States in the region should have the right to participate in determining the modalities of their approach and in the elaboration of the envisaged measures; thirdly, external Powers should respect the agreed regional status through the assumption of obligations and responsibilities; and, fourthly, disarmament in a particular region or subregion cannot be considered in isolation from the military realities prevailing in other regions.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Lastly, science and technology have become dominant aspects in our continuing endeavours to develop new infrastructures for security and disarmament, peace and cooperation. They exert a profound influence on mankind because of the globalization of problems today, and they can serve to bring about positive change or can produce a negative impact.

In addition to its beneficial effects, modern technology has also developed a momentum of its own, and technological changes are outpacing the political process of seeking security at lower levels of armaments and armed forces. There is also a compelling need to consider the implications certain technological developments that may undermine rather than facilitate the consolidation of the favourable political developments we have witnessed in recent years.

Furthermore, technology has continued to spawn new generations of weapons, both nuclear and non-nuclear, at unsupportable cost and with incalculable dangers. It is equally disturbing that technological developments constantly outstrip the pace of negotiations, thereby offsetting whatever progress may have been made in arms limitations so far. The undeniable reality is that while one category of weapons is being reduced or eliminated, it is also being replaced by new and more potent weapons. It has been generally acknowledged that weapons of the future will be more destabilizing, create greater vulnerability, increase the probability of war and complicate efforts to reverse the arms race. Thus, the centrality of technological innovation is pertinent not only to the qualitative arms race but to global security as well. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we should embark on a thorough assessment of these developments and trends with a view to elaborating common understanding and guidelines.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

In my delegation's view, there are few alternatives to multilateral action aimed at stemming the qualitative spiral of the arms race. Collective endeavours to deal with potentially destabilizing developments in weapons technology have now become imperative. I believe that the palpable improvement in the global political climate offers an unprecedented opportunity for a constructive dialogue to redirect science and technology to meet the global challenges of environmental degradation, economic inequity and the slow pace of social advancement.

In conclusion, the resurgence of the United Nations and the renewed trust in its capacity to act effectively impose upon us the obligation to mobilize our political will and to use the Organization more effectively for sustaining the disarmament process and strengthening international peace and security. Yet we continue to witness a disturbing trend towards bilateralism on priority issues of disarmament. It bears repeating that the interests of the vast majority of Member States can be fully reflected only in the multilateral forums of the United Nations, which has been accorded the central role and primary responsibility in disarmament.

In this work the Disarmament Commission has a unique role to play. Since its reconstitution more than a decade ago, the Commission has amassed an enviable record and has proved its utility. The proposals submitted to it and the comprehensive discussions held on pertinent issues have contributed to greater clarity. The progress made in this forum will no doubt provide a strong impetus to the ongoing bilateral efforts and to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. I would even go so far as to suggest that the enhanced status of the Commission can be directly attributed to the adoption of new and more responsible approaches with creativity and a sense of realism It is in that firm conviction that my delegation commits itself to enhancing

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

even further the efficacy of the Disarmament Commission and to preserving its utility within the multilateral disarmament process.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): Allow me at the outset, Mr. Chairman, to extend to you the warm congratulations of my delegation on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the 1991 session. It is especially reassuring to see a skilful and experienced diplomat like yourself, so active in the United Nations in so many different areas, presiding over the work on the challenging subjects that are before us for consideration this year in the Commission. You may rest assured of the full cooperation of my delegation in this regard. May I also, through you, convey our congratulations to the other officers of the Commission. Last but not least, I should like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Nana Sutresna, who so competently guided our deliberations at the 1990 session.

When the United Nations Disarmament Commission met last year the world was undergoing momentous political changes, and there was an anticipation that a new era was about to unfold. The threats of a global nuclear holocaust were gradually being reduced, political dialogue between the two main military alliances was being enhanced and democratic processes were spreading in important regions of the globe. There was a general and positive expectation that the time of confrontation was about to come to an end and that the consequent peace dividends would allow us to turn a new page in history.

Today, although the progress seen last year has not been reversed, we find ourselves in a somewhat different mood. The tragic chain of events unleashed on 2 August 1990 underscored the fragility of the political and military stability in certain regions of the world and reminded us of the destructiveness of modern warfare.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

The present moment is still fraught with uncertainties and question marks about the shape of things to come. On the one hand, the Gulf crisis illustrated the awesome capabilities of military arsenals, enhanced as they are by modern science and technology. It also highlighted the compounded destabilizing effect that the development, spread and use of increasingly sophisticated arsenals may have on international peace and security.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

On the other hand, as the easing of tensions between the super-Powers and their former rival blocs advances, there are hopes that such a process could propitiate a new framework for international cooperation, not only between East and West, but also between the industrialized world and the developing countries.

Continuing progress in science and technology is one of the most conspicuous and fundamental features of contemporary civilization. It has been a key factor in the emergence and consolidation of modern economies, as well as in the ensuing improvement of the quality of life in those countries where it has borne fruit. The first and second industrial revolutions and the current information revolution bear witness to the truth of that assertion.

At the same time, those very advances have served at times to promote the perfectioning of military arsenals, be they for defensive or for aggressive purposes. In certain periods in history the unfortunate convergence of economic competition and military rivalry has often stimulated spiralling arms races, which led to many a wasteful diversion of resources that could have been channelled to the more pressing needs of civilian populations.

At present we face a unique opportunity to enhance the positive applications and attempt to limit the negative applications of scientific and technological progress, bearing in mind the lessons we have learned with the benefit of hindsight.

The free flows of scientific and technological knowledge, as well as of goods and services derived therefrom, are crucial for the improvement of the well-being of peoples, especially in those regions of the world where living conditions are still far from satisfactory by modern standards. At the same

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time, we recognize the need to prevent the misuse of knowledge, products and services for purposes that could endanger international peace and security.

It is, to be sure, urgently necessary to build a universal consensus on the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields, with due regard to their legitimate role in the development process of countries. In this connection, the delegation of Brazil believes that the United Nations is especially suited for such an exercise, as the authoritative multilateral body entrusted with a broad manadate for the promotion of peace and security, disarmament and development in the economic, social, scientific and technological fields.

Having said that, I should like to draw the Commissions's attention to the fact that in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar made the following relevant remarks:

> "It is, of course, vitally important to provide developing countries unimpeded access to the benefits of science and technology. This, however, should not mean that the quantitative arms race is replaced by a qualitative one, and high-technology weapons are introduced that would destabilize regional and even global security. I would suggest that the international community make a special effort to clarify the important issues involved and produce clear and fair guidelines acceptable to all. This would remove a great deal of apprehension in a large number of countries that are affected by the supply policies currently applied by exporters of technology." (A/45/1, p. 20)

That concise yet meaningful passage encapsulates admirably the main points that could guide our discussions on this important theme: first, access of developing countries to the legitimate benefits of modern science

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and technology; secondly, control of the misuse of high technology for destabilizing ends; thirdly, the need to clarify the main issues involved in the transfer of high technology, such as the assessment of their potentially military or dual nature, the role of safeguards, the protection of proprietary rights, the adequacy of retribution, and the conditions for fair access by developing countries, among others; and, fourthly, the establishment of equitable and acceptable criteria and guidelines for the transfer of high technology, among suppliers and recipients, such as universality, transparency, predictability, equity, reliability of transfer and verifiability of proper use.

Brazil attaches high importance to this item on the Commission's agenda. It is our belief that a balanced and unbiased review of the positive, as well as the negative, applications of science and technology, would allow us to arrive at a meaningful picture of current predicaments and to find possible consensual ways to overcome them.

Many of the existing control regimes have not been proved effective in curbing the clandestine transfer of sensitive technologies and equipment to certain parties. This cannot but cause concern to all States that desire to uphold peace and security in international relations, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

This situation is linked to the intrinsically unbalanced nature of at least some of the existing control mechanisms; their oligopolistic nature, their unilateral application by suppliers, their selective field of application and the inconsistent record of enforcement of their own rules.

An open, multilateral discussion on this matter, involving both supplier and recipient countries, could lead to the establishment of a more universally

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acceptable regime or regimes, which would adequately address the legitimate concern of all sides. The specific concerns of supplier countries about diversion to military purposes of their high-technology products could be properly supervised by means of multilaterally agreed measures of verification and safgeguards. Likewise, aspects related to the protection of industrial secrets and proprietary rights could be duly considered in the light of the readiness of recipient countries to give fair retribution for technologies necessary to their development process.

The higher the recognition of the fairness of the terms of a regime, the more broadly it would be adhered to. The more universal the participation in such a regime, the more effective it would be in ensuring control of misuse of technologies and promoting its proper use for the urgent and legitimate tasks relating to the development of nations.

Brazil believes that this is a crucial theme to be addressed by the international community, and it is ready to work in earnest with all interested parties with a view to ensuring that the fruits of scientific and technological progress are devoted to enhancing peace and security in its broadest sense - that is: to minimize conflicts and to maximize development among nations.

Nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority of the international community in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. In the last few years notable progress has been made in this regard, substantiating the conviction long held by my delegation that when there is political will there is a way of achieving meaningful results in disarmament.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

It is felt, however, that the direction and speed of the process of eliminating nuclear weapons should not be determined by a handful of protagonists. International peace and security should be consolidated with the active participation and cooperation of all countries, since each and every one of them has a rightful stake in this matter in so far as it affects its legitimate interests.

By undertaking not to acquire or develop nuclear weapons, the overwhelming majority of the international community has unequivocally demonstrated their commitment to peace, even at the cost in some cases of compromising their own security requirements. The non-nuclear-weapon States can legitimately expect and demand that the total elimination of nuclear weapons be achieved at the earliest possible date.

The argument that only those who possess nuclear weapons should determine whether or not to adopt selective measures of nuclear-weapons limitation according to their security conveniences could even be perceived as an absurd encouragement to other countries to engage in nuclear proliferation so that they too might be allowed to have a say. Let us not seek to obtain selective security at the price of collective insecurity.

There is an urgent need, therefore, to strengthen the multilateral process of nuclear disarmament with a view to ensuring international peace and security based on a true conception of collective security. The role of the United Nations in this process needs to be enhanced; this will infuse the Organization with the new vitality it has been showing in other fields.

The conditions and mechanisms for the strengthening of this process are already in place. With the demise of the cold war, the logic of the ultimate nuclear holocaust is no longer warranted. The maintenance of huge strategic

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arsenals becomes counter-productive as it diverts resources from more productive applications and as it is seen as a disproportionate deterrent against non-nuclear-weapon States.

It should be recalled in this connection that many non-nuclear-weapon States have chosen to become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in order to feel guaranteed against the threat of nuclear arsenals. Some non-nuclear-weapon States have preferred to achieve the same aim through other instruments such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as demonstrated by the joint actions currently being taken by Argentina and Brazil with a view to bringing that Treaty into full force for both countries.

But strictly speaking the obligation of nuclear disarmament does not apply to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the non-proliferation Treaty or the Treaty of Tlatelolco, since from the start they have not possessed nuclear weapons. For non-nuclear-weapon States those instruments were and have remained an undertaking of non-armament. Thus, it is incumbent upon the nuclear-weapon States to fulfill their part by eliminating the only real source of proliferation.

Multilateral bodies such as the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission should endeavour to give further momentum to the process of nuclear disarmament by summoning the necessary political will to realize the long-held promise of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

For more than a century Brazil has enjoyed a history of peaceful coexistence, friendship and cooperation with its neighbours in South America. We belong to a region which has one of the lowest levels of concentration of armaments. Our region has set an example of how an active process of dialogue

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and cooperation is instrumental in strengthening and enhancing political understanding and confidence among States.

As a regional contribution to eliminating the scourge of nuclear weapons the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the early 1960s took the initiative of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region. The adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967 was the first example of the military denuclearization of a large and densely populated region.

Other efforts have also been undertaken by the countries of the region to achieve the goal of enhancing confidence and strengthening regional peace and security at the lowest level of armaments. One example of our commitment to that goal was the establishment of the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean with the task of coordinating regional activities under the World Disarmament Campaign and of facilitating the development of effective measures of confidence building, arms limitation and disarmament.

The establishment of the Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic at the initiative of the countries on both margins of the South Atlantic also represents an unequivocal contribution at the interregional level to the enhancement of global security. The objectives of the Zone, as set out in General Assembly resolution 41/11, clearly express the desire of the South Atlantic States to promote further regional peace and cooperation, thus contributing to maintaining the region free from confrontation of any kind for the benefit of global security.

At their first and second meetings, held respectively at Rio de Janeiro and at Abuja, the South Atlantic States reaffirmed their commitment to the principles and objectives of the Zone of peace and cooperation. Above all,

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both meetings clearly indicated that the Zone represented a strong incentive for the countries of the region to promote, intensify and enlarge their political understanding and cooperation, to formulate and implement joint projects for their economic and social development and for the protection of the environment, and to continue working for the preservation of peace and security in the whole region.

We therefore welcome the timely decision to include on our agenda an item dealing with the "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security". It is our expectation that this will offer a useful opportunity for all members of the Commission to draw upon the rich experience derived from the regional efforts of the Latin American States on the one hand and of the South Atlantic community on the other.

In that connection I wish to highlight three aspects which derive from our experience and which we believe should be at the basis of our coming deliberations on this new item.

First, if they are to be effective, regional efforts, particularly in the field of disarmament and arms control, have to be made at the initiative of and with the participation of the States of the region taking into account the characteristics of each region.

Secondly, disarmament efforts at the regional level cannot be conceived in isolation from overall progress towards disarmament. While regional disarmament measures can contribute to the general process of arms limitation and disarmament, they should be undertaken in correlation with disarmament measures at the global level in order to keep a balanced perspective and avoid placing one region at a disadvantage vis-à-vis another.

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Thirdly, the experience achieved in one region can certainly serve as an example or as a useful indication for other regional efforts, but it cannot be automatically transferred. The process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, for instance, can be understood only if we bear in mind the history of intra-European relations and of the acute ideological confrontation and intense arms race that characterized East-West relations until the recent past.

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These three aspects would certainly suggest that we avoid the misconception of trying to develop one single approach to regional disarmament. Our deliberations should, therefore, draw upon the multiplicity of situations, experiences and possibilities, trying to identify guidelines that may enhance the contribution that regional disarmament efforts can make towards the common goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

Last year, Mr. Chairman, under your guidance, we held an extensive and fruitful debate on the item entitled, "Objective information on military matters". Within the structure debated proposed by you, the Group dealing with the item examined a broad range of issues related to the concepts, fields of application, dimensions and parameters of the subject, and considered the question of the role of the United Nations and of the type of document that should emanate from the deliberations on the item.

That debate has set the ground for a more result-oriented debate this year, focusing on the areas where possible agreement might be reached, as well as on those questions requiring further clarifications on divergent positions. To that end, we will benefit not only from last year's report of the Consultation Group, but also from your very comprehensive statement made at the end of our deliberations.

As is the case concerning the issue of science and technology, we are increasingly aware of the need to promote transparency in all fields of the disarmament process. To this end, and as a recognition of the central role played by the United Nations in disarmament questions, the Government of Brazil is prepared to inform the Secretary-General, through the standardized

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reporting system, of its military expenditures for each fiscal year. Our first report is currently being prepared and should reach the secretariat in due course.

As was the case last year, we will actively participate in the work under this item of our agenda with a view to contributing to the preparation of a document which could reflect the areas of agreement and of divergence on the item. Last year my delegation had the opportunity to point out some of the issues on which, in our view, we should concentrate our attention in 1991. I wish to recall those basic points very briefly. First, the consideration of the issue should take into account the principle of undiminished security for all States. Secondly, the validity of measures of objective information on military matters depends upon specific conditions which should be clearly addressed. Thirdly, objective information on military matters cannot be considered as a disarmament measure per se: the provision of such information should be linked to further confidence-building measures and to concrete measures in the field of disarmament. Lastly, the discussion of the issue should therefore take place within the broader framework of international efforts towards disarmament. With these concepts in mind, we are ready to examine all documents and proposals put forward as a contribution to furthering our work, so as to allow us to arrive at the end of next year's session with a comprehensive and forward-looking document on the subject, which would be the first concrete result of the effort to reorganize the work of the Commission.

We have a most challenging and stimulating task ahead of us. Each of the four substantive items on the agenda deserves the full attention of our delegations in view of its relevance to the fostering of the multilateral

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disarmament process. My delegation is sure that in approaching our deliberations with a constructive, flexible and cooperative spirit, we shall be able to attain meaningful results which would further enhance the role of the Disarmament Commission as a pivotal deliberative component of the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Mr. WAGENMAKERS (Netherlands): Speaking on behalf of the Presidency of the European Community and its member States, I have the honour to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important office of Chairman of the 1991 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. This election is another proof of your outstanding skills and professionalism. We hope that, under your guidance, our efforts will be successful. I should like to praise your endeavours in drafting a substantial and comprehensive working agenda, which reflects the streamlining and rationalization of the Commission's work and the enhancement of its functioning. In this regard, the Twelve would also like to recognize the important role played by last year's Chairman, Ambassador Nana Sutresna, in producing through formal consultations an agreement on the 1991 working agenda. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

Indeed, the 1991 session of the Commission will be crucial in so far as delegations show the ability to implement the important decisions concerning the meaningful reform of its work that were so successfully agreed upon during last year's session. I should like to recall in that regard that the Twelve suggested a number of criteria that provide a useful basis for proceeding with our work in a new vein. We have this year's agenda before us, and it pleases me to note that the organization of the work that awaits us in the coming weeks has been positively influenced by those criteria.

(Mr. Wagenmakers, Netherlands)

With a view to an enhanced future role of the United Nations in relevant disarmament matters, it is important that the Commission show a realistic approach towards the selection of its agenda items. As the Commission was to be the sole deliberative body within the United Nations system for the consideration of selected specific issues in the field of disarmament, it is essential that its general agenda be broadly based and flexible and that its working agenda be specific and susceptible to achieving consensus within the timeframe specified in the reform programme. These criteria seem to have been met to a large extent, bearing in mind the need for balance, general acceptability and inclusion of items deriving from the range of issues considered by the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament in preparing the Commission's working agenda. Let us now strive for the practical implementation of these reforms and for the efficient execution of our work in this new and challenging constellation.

Since our last session, a year has gone by which produced change and upheaval in a positive as well as in a negative sense. Events during the past 12 months have had an important impact on international security, and have stressed the relevance of our ongoing efforts in the field of arms control and disarmament.

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On the one hand, the East-West confrontation has been superseded by cooperation and, partly for that reason, arms control and disarmament negotiations have intensified and achieved progress. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, in particular, marks a substantial achievement in multilateral arms control among the participating States in Europe. If properly implemented, it will make a major contribution to enhancing security and stability. Unfortunately, there are a number of outstanding problems that threaten to undermine the letter and spirit of the Treaty. On the other hand, the war in the Gulf showed that there can be no let-up in the world community's vigilance to ensure international peace and security. The war demonstrated once more the necessity of effective arms control and disarmament in general, and regional initiatives in particular, in order to attain eventually the goal of a world free from danger and fear. The Gulf conflict also reminded us of the dangers of allowing an arms build-up far exceeding legitimate national defense and security needs. In this connection, the Twelve consider the rapid conclusion of a global, comprehensive and verifiable chemical weapons convention to be a matter of the highest priority.

The report by the Disarmament Commission on its 1990 session recognized that

> "The regional approach to disarmament is one of the essential elements in global efforts" (A/45/42, para. 34 (para."6(11)") -

a consideration echoed in operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 45/58 M, which was adopted by consensus last year. The Twelve are convinced that, in general, arms control and disarmament goals are pursued more effectively through practical steps. In this respect, achievements at a regional level may, alongside bilateral and multilateral negotiations,

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facilitate progress towards arms control and disarmament agreements involving the international community as a whole, and thus promote the ultimate goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

In this context, it might be useful to recall some basic principles to be applied to regional arms control and disarmament efforts that were submitted by the Twelve in their reply to General Assembly resolution 39/63 F. These include, first, consensus among the States involved; secondly, respect for existing interrelations between the concerned region and the rest of the world; thirdly, respect for the right of each State to define the appropriate conditions for its security as well as to ensure such conditions in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations; and, fourthly, streamlining of regional efforts into the global framework of United Nations measures. Moreover, initiatives for regional arrangements should come from within the region itself. Finally, States outside the region should support such arrangements and not contravene their objectives.

The creation of a climate of confidence is another important condition for successful regional disarmament negotiations. While regional arms control and disarmament measures must take account of the particular characteristics of each region and the security concerns of all relevant countries, the recent experience of the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe (CFE) suggests that regional initiatives can prosper if certain additional guidelines are observed by all participants in the regional process.

Finally, disarmament should take place within the framework of an agreed set of principles reflecting a wide degree of understanding on the basic tenets of relations between States. In this regard, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe exemplifies what can be achieved between countries long held apart by historical divisions but fundamentally united by

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a common set of values. First and foremost, reductions of armaments to lower levels should take place under conditions of increased stability and of undiminished security for all parties. Secondly, the security interests of all parties concerned must be taken into account in such a way that legitimate national defence requirements can be met at decreasing cost. Thirdly, an effective verification system must be established. Finally, regional disarmament should interact positively with bilateral and other regional political initiatives. Aspects of the CFE experience might provide a useful model for arms control initiatives in other regions.

On the basis of those principles and guidelines, regional armament reductions and the concomitant easing of regional tensions could produce new concepts of security at a regional level, notably through the establishment of conciliation mechanisms as well as innovative forms of multilateral cooperation in the field of security. At the same time, regional disarmament initiatives should be set against a background of growing confidence between the parties concerned.

One way to enhance confidence between States, both at the regional and at the global levels, would be to promote further transparency and openness in the military field as a contribution to the further reduction of the dangers of military confrontation. A means to that end is found in the provision of objective information on military matters. The Twelve remain convinced that a better flow of information on military capabilities would help to relieve international tensions and contribute to the building of confidence between States. Such a flow can contribute to the conclusion and implementation of verifiable arms control and disarmament agreements. The Twelve consider that the 1990 Vienna document on confidence- and security-building measures is a significant step towards greater military transparency in Europe and the

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further breaking down of mistrust between States, since this agreement stipulates that there should be a detailed and extensive annual exchange of military information. We now look forward to the holding this year in Vienna of a second seminar on military doctrines as a follow-up to the successful experience of the first Vienna seminar, which advanced the cause of openness and predictability of military activities in Europe.

Procedures and provisions for the flow of objective information on security concepts, military doctrine, and figures on armed forces and armaments, as well as on military potentials and transparency of military spending and military budgets, could become a cornerstone of international security. They would promote confidence between States and reduce the risk of intentional or unintentional military conflict.

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Such procedures could create a climate of confidence which would, in turn, facilitate the expanding task of verifying compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements. The Twelve are looking forward to a substantial discussion of objective information on the basis of the topics mentioned in the structure proposed by the Chairman of last year's consultative group on this item.

Allow me to dwell for a moment on the subject of the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields. The Twelve consider the pursuit of scientific and technological development per se to be a neutral process. Rather, it is the application of the results of scientific and technological research that might have a beneficial effect on several areas in arms control and disarmament. Moreover, national defence and security requirements argue for a continuing awareness of scientific and technological developments.

Our aim, however, is to prevent wars and, instead of war, to enhance and strengthen international peace and security. Scientific and technological developments could be applied to further a number of causes: the application of satellite monitoring, for example, could improve transparency and our knowledge of military capabilities. In a broader sense, scientific and technological developments could enhance the possibilities and improve the methods of verifying compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements, whose growing importance was convincingly analysed in the recent United Nations study prepared by a group of qualified governmental experts and entitled "Study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification".

In this context, the Twelve reaffirm their support for the 16 principles of verification drawn up by the Disarmament Commission. Science and technology have a major role to play in the development of arms-disposal techniques which are safe,

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transparent, cost-effective and environmentally sound; a case in point will be the destruction of chemical weapons and chemical-weapons production facilities under the future chemical-weapons convention. Furthermore, scientific and technological applications might positively influence processes of conversion of military industry to civilian production.

Resolution 45/61, on science and technology for disarmament, adopted without a vote during last year's General Assembly, goes even beyond the scope of arms control and disarmament in stating the conviction that:

> "science and technology can profoundly contribute to solving the problems of mankind, especially to promoting its social and economic development". (res. 45/61, 1st preambular para.)

As applied to our work in this forum, it is our task to explore, collectively, avenues of international cooperation in the use of scientific and technological achievements for disarmament-related purposes. The fruitful results of the United Nations Conference on New Trends in Science and Technology: Implications for International Peace and Security, held at Sendai, Japan, in April 1990, and of the United Nations Conference on Conversion: Economic Adjustments in an Era of Arms Reductions, held in Moscow in August 1990, may guide us in tackling this subject.

For a considerable time, nuclear disarmament has been one of the priority topics on the Disarmament Commission's agenda. It remains one of the highest priorities of the Twelve. Nuclear disarmament affects the security of all States; therefore, it is a matter of necessity for all to make efforts to foster progress in this field. However, the primary responsibility for this rests on those States which possess the largest nuclear arsenals.

Among the factors for increased stability in the present international situation, there are two which seem particularly important: first, the

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satisfactory implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty), which will, by the end of May 1991, achieve the elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons, and, secondly, the prospect of a START agreement, resulting in substantial cuts in the strategic arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union. The Twelve welcome these developments. We believe that making further progress in nuclear arms control and disarmament continues to be one of the most serious challenges in the world today: we are therefore convinced that progress in this field requires continued proper attention to be paid to such issues, which deserve continued discussion in the Disarmament Commission. Our common wish is to see the achievement of further substantial and balanced reductions in the global level of nuclear weapons, beginning with those of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Alongside their support for nuclear arms reductions, the Twelve reconfirm their strong commitment to preventing nuclear proliferation, which represents one of the greatest threats to world security and stability facing the international community. The events in the Gulf have highlighted the importance of maintaining an effective international nuclear non-proliferation regime, a task to which the Twelve attach the greatest importance; they will make every effort to contribute to strengthening non-proliferation and encouraging participation by more countries in the regime.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an important element in the non-proliferation regime, and the members of the European Community, whether they are parties to the NPT or not, welcome the contribution of the NPT review conference last year to the overall aim of strengthening that regime.

In conclusion, the States members of the European Community are looking forward to a fruitful session at which we shall be able to concentrate on important

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subjects with wide-ranging implications for the future of the disarmament process. In doing so, the Disarmament Commission as a whole will continue to fulfill its role as a deliberative body entrusted, among its main tasks, with considering the general guidelines and basic principles of arms control and disarmament.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.